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It is pretended that Lord Orrery confirmed the whole of this story, even to the having seen the butler raised into the air by the invisible beings who strove to carry him off, only he did not bear witness to the passage which seems to call the purchase of cards an unlawful errand.

## RARE DISCOVERY,

ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER MOY, COUNTY OF MAYO.

(A fact.)

Not a hundred years ago, there lived on the banks of the noble river above named, a person who, though neither a very well educated man or profound naturalist, was—what is, perhaps, of more consequence in the eyes of the world—a wealthy farmer, and a justice of the peace for one of the neighbouring counties. It happened that his worship, who was in the frequent habit of visiting his numerous farms on this beautiful river, was obliged to cross a small stream in its vicinity, and, although on horse-back, he was apprehensive of wetting a portion of his dress, out of which he took no small pride, and which he denominated his "yalla-gaiters." He, therefore, divested himself of those useful and ornamental appendages, and placing them across the shoulders of his horse, pursued his way, and after some time arrived at the town of Ballina. Here, to his great horror, he discovered that he had dropped his "yalla gaiters," and was pondering on the propriety of returning immediately in search of them, when his magisterial attention was attracted by a crowd of gaping rustics assembled round the caravan of an itinerant Polito, on which were depicted, in glowing colours, the various animals contained within. The magistrate forced his way into the crowd, and got in front of the caravan just as the showman, who had been delivering to the bye-standers a long catalogue of attractions, summed all up by announcing a pair of fine alligators found on the banks of the Nile. "Yalla gaiters," roared the magistrate, springing from his horse, and seizing the astonished showman by the collar, "you rascal, them is my yalla gaiters, give them up to me this minute, or, if you don't, I'll cram you into jail, for I'm a magisthrate." "Your alligators," says the astonished and affrighted showman, "why them there alligators were found on the banks of the Nile?" "Found on the banks of the devil," said the magistrate, "none of your thricks upon me, you rascal, I say they were found on the banks of the Moy, and they are my "yalla gaiters." All the protestations of the poor showman as to his innocence would probably have been vain, had not a friend of the worthy justice, who happened to pass at the time, and who was better skilled in natural history, explained to him his mistake, on which he slipped a crown into the hand of the terrified showman, and desired him to say nothing about the matter. C.

## THE IRISH FUNERAL CRY.

The well known custom so long used in this country, of keening, or lamenting over the dead, is of the most remote antiquity. History informs us, that it was known to the Greeks and Romans, who, however, seem to have borrowed it from the Eastern nations, among whom probably it had its origin; and from the Scriptures we learn that it was practised among the Israelites. Dr. O'Brien tells us, that the word in the Irish language, as originally and more correctly written, is *cine*, and not, as modern orthoëpists have it, *caoine*; and this makes it almost identical with the Hebrew word *cina*, which signifies lamentation or weeping with clapping of hands. The learned Jezreel Jones, in speaking of the Shillah or Tarmazeght, a language or dialect of the inhabitants of the mountainous part of south-western Barbary, in a letter to John Chamberlayn, dated "Westmonasterii, 24 Decembr. 1714," declares that "the Shilhenses have the same custom as the Arabs, the Jews, and the Irish, of lamenting over the dead, uttering various cries of grief, tearing their hair, and asking the deceased why did he die? why did he leave them? and desiring that death would seize them also, in order that they might rejoin him whom they lamented." According to an old work, Armstrong's History of Minorca, the peasantry of that island in their lament, ask the dead "if he had not food, raiment, and friends—and wherefore then did he die?" Sir Walter Scott informs us that the *coronach* of the Highlanders is precisely similar to the *ululatus* of the Romans, and the *ullaloo* of the Irish; that the words of it are not always articulate, but when they are so, they express the praises of the deceased, and the loss the clan would sustain by his death.

The funeral song introduced in Shakspeare's beautiful play of Cymbeline, where the scene is laid in Wales, upon the supposed death of the disguised Imogen, will, no doubt, recur to some of our readers.

From the fourth volume of the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, we transcribe the following passages, descriptive of the ancient observance of the custom—

"The Irish have been always remarkable for their funeral lamentations, and this peculiarity has been noticed by almost every traveller who visited them; and it seems derived from their Celtic ancestors, the primæval inhabitants of this isle. Cambrensis, in the twelfth century, says, the Irish then musically expressed their griefs; that is, they applied the musical art, in which they excelled all others, to the orderly celebration of funeral obsequies, by dividing the mourners into two bodies, each alternately singing their part, and the whole at times, joining in full chorus.

"The body of the deceased, dressed in grave clothes, and ornamented with flowers, was placed on a bier, or some elevated spot. The relations and *keeners* (singing mourners) then ranged themselves in two divisions, one at the head, and the other at the foot of the corpse. The bards and croteries had before prepared the funeral caoinan. The chief bard of the head chorus began by singing the first stanza in a low doleful tone, which was softly accompanied by the harp: at the conclusion, the foot semichorus began the lamentation, or *ullaloo*, from the final note of the preceding stanza, in which they were answered by the head semichorus; then both united in one general chorus. The chorus of the first stanza being ended, the chief bard of the foot semichorus began the second gol, or lamentation, in which they were answered by that of the head, and as before, both united in the general full chorus. Thus alternately, were the song and the choruses performed during the night. The genealogy, rank, possessions, the virtues and vices of the dead were rehearsed, and a number of interrogations were addressed to the deceased: as, why did he die? If married, whether his wife was faithful to him, his sons dutiful, or good hunters or warriors? If a woman, whether her daughters were fair or chaste? If a young man, whether he had been crossed in love? or if the blue-eyed maids of Erin had treated him with scorn?"

In ancient times it was the duty of the bard, who was attached to the family of each chief or noble, assisted by some of the household, to raise the funeral song; but, at a more recent period, this has been entrusted to hired mourners, who were remunerated according to the estimation in which their talents were held. We are told that formerly the metrical feet of their compositions were much attended to, but on the decline of the Irish bards these feet were gradually neglected, and they fell into a kind of slip-shod metre among the women who have entirely engrossed the office of keeners or mourners.

From Mr. T. Crofton Croker, the talented chronicler of many of our old legends and customs, we quote the following highly graphic account of the performance of a keener by profession of the present day:

"Having a curiosity," he says, "to hear the *keen* more distinctly sung than over a corpse, when it is accompanied by a wild and inarticulate uproar as a chorus, I prevailed on an elderly woman who was renowned for her skill in keening to recite for me some of these dirges. This woman, whose name was Harrington, led a wandering kind of life, travelling from cottage to cottage about the country, and though in fact subsisting on charity, found every where not merely a welcome, but had numerous invitations on account of the vast store of Irish verses she had collected and could repeat. Her memory was indeed extraordinary: and the clearness, quickness, and elegance with which she translated from the Irish into English, though unable to read or write, is almost incredible. Before she commenced repeating, she mumbled for a short time, probably the beginning of each stanza to assure herself of the arrangement, with her eyes closed, rocking her body backwards and forwards, as if keeping time to the measure of the verse. She then began in a kind of whining recitation, but as she proceeded, and as the composition required it, her voice assumed a variety of deep and fine tones, and the energy with which many passages were delivered, proved her perfect comprehension and strong feeling of the subject; but her eyes always continued shut, perhaps to prevent interruption to her thoughts, or her attention being engaged by any surrounding object.

Till about the middle of the last century, the custom was

very generally adhered to in Ireland, as well in families of the highest condition, as among those of the lower orders; and many of the elegiac poems, composed on such occasions, have come down to us, which by their figurative language, and highly poetical imagery, evince astonishing genius, and are strongly indicative of the natural talent of our people. The learned Dr. Adam Clarke has preserved one of considerable beauty, the music of which, he tells us, though rude and simple, is nevertheless, bold, highly impassioned, and deeply affecting, and is often used among the decendants of the aboriginal Irish on funeral occasions. We however prefer giving the following "lament of Morian Shehone for Miss Mary Bourke," which is literally translated from the original Irish.

"Silence prevails; it is an awful silence. The voice of Mary is heard no longer in the valley.

"Yes, thou art gone, O Mary! but Morian Shehone will raise the song of woe, and bewail thy fate.

"Snow white was thy virtue; the youths gazed on thee with rapture; and old age listened with pleasure to the soft music of thy tongue.

"Thy beauty was brighter than the sun which shone around thee, O Mary! but thy sun is set, and has left the soul of thy friend in darkness.

"Sorrow for thee is dumb, save the wailings of Morian Shehone; and grief has not yet tears to shed for Mary.

"I have cried over the rich man; but when the stone was laid upon his grave, my grief was at an end. Not so with my heart's darling; the grave cannot hide Mary from the view of Morian Shehone.

"I see her in the four corners of her habitation, which was once gilded by her presence.

"Thou didst not fall off like a withered leaf, which hangs trembling and insecure: no, it was a rude blast which brought thee to the dust, O Mary!

"Hadst thou not friends? Hadst thou not bread to eat, and raiment to put on? Hadst thou not youth and beauty, Mary? Then mightest thou not have been happy?

"But the spoiler came, and disordered my peace: the grim tyrant has taken away my only support in Mary!

"In thy state of probation, thou wert kind hearted to all, and none envied thee thy good fortune. Oh! that the lamentations of thy friends—Oh! that the burning tears of Morian Shehone could bring back from the grave the peerless Mary!

"But alas! this cannot be: then twice in every year, while the virgins of the valley celebrate the birth and death of Mary, under the wide spreading elm, let her spirit hover round them, and teach them to emulate her virtues.

"So falls into the depth of silence the lament of Morian Shehone."

Of late years, the custom has fallen greatly into disuse, and is now of rare occurrence, except in some very few old families, and among the peasantry, and with them it has now generally degenerated into a mere cry of an extremely wild and mournful character, which however, consisting of several notes, forming a very harmonious musical passage, approaches to a species of song, but is almost always destitute of words.

The crowd of people, who assemble at the funerals of the peasantry in some parts of the country, is amazing, often exceeding a thousand persons, men and women. They gather as the bearers of the hearse proceed on their way, and when they pass through any village, or approach any houses, the wail swells out still louder than before, which gives notice that a funeral is passing, and immediately the people flock out to follow it. In the province of Munster it is said that it is a common thing for the women to follow a funeral, to join in the universal cry with all their might and main for some time, and then to turn and ask, "Arrah! who is it that's dead? who is it we're crying for?" The peasantry every where are wonderfully eager to attend the funerals of their friends and relations, and they make their relationships branch out to a great extent. The proof that a poor man has been well beloved during his life, is his having a crowded funeral. Even the poorest people have their own burying places, that is spots of ground in the churchyards, which are situated sometimes in the wildest parts of the mountains, their situation indicated by some remnant of a ruin, and a few scattered tombstones and the low green hillocks of the graves. Here, they say, their ancestors have been buried ever since the wars of Ireland; and, though these burial places should be many miles from the place where a man dies, his friends and neighbours take care to carry his corpse thither.

The first time I ever heard the funeral cry, I was greatly struck by it, owing, perhaps, in some degree to its coming upon me quite unexpectedly. I was riding along an unfrequented road in one of the most retired parts of the County of Meath; I well remember it was a lovely morning early in spring: the trees were rapidly assuming their most brilliant clothing of green, there was a genial warmth in the air, the sun shone out brightly, and the lively songs of the birds added their animating influence at once to cheer and tranquillize the feelings, and I sauntered on in that delightful state of mind which one enjoys, when all the cares and anxieties of life for a few short moments utterly forgotten, one is engaged solely in drinking in a variety of undefinable, but yet highly pleasurable emotions from every quarter. A faint wailing sound, so wild and indescribable, that it seemed almost something unearthly, came floating on the light morning breeze, but so indistinct and so faint from distance, that it was repeated more than once before I could be quite certain it was more than mere imagination. However, I heard it again and again at intervals of a few seconds, the sound becoming each time more distinct as I approached the quarter from whence it came, or the wind bore it a little more strongly towards me. From a sort of murmur it swelled out into a full tone, and then died away into silence; I know nothing it resembled so much as the sounds of an Eolian harp, as they rise gradually in strength, and then sink into the softest cadences. At length reaching a turn in the road, I perceived at some distance a vast crowd of people advancing towards me, and stretching along a considerable extent of ground; part of them only I was able to see, the remainder were concealed from my view by the windings of the road. In the front where the crowd was most dense, I distinguished by their cloaks (several of which being scarlet gave a highly pictorial effect to the group) twenty or thirty females, and in the midst of them a bier carried by men, who were occasionally relieved by others of those nearest to them. I soon perceived that the funeral song was begun by some of these women, that it was gradually swelled by the voices of the remainder, and the men joined occasionally their deeper tones. The effect of the whole was most striking, and had something even grand in it; the song was guttural, but by no means monotonous, and whether the contrast with the bright and joyous spring morning may not have rendered it more melancholy and lugubrious I know not, but it certainly struck me as the most singularly plaintive and mournful expression of excessive grief that could well be imagined.

As I drew nearer I perceived that the persons who composed the cortege were affected by very different feelings indeed. Some few of those who followed close to the coffin were evidently overcome by the most heartfelt and poignant affliction. Some of the women especially gave way to the most unrestrained and vehement expression of the liveliest sorrow, weeping loudly, throwing up their hands and clapping them together, or striking them violently against their bosoms. It occurred to me involuntarily that it was no small trial of the true pathos of this ancient melody to see that it bore with undiminished effect so close a juxtaposition with the real demonstration of genuine and unartificial grief; indeed I fancied at times that some of them, even in the utmost abandonment of their sorrow, joined in the wail of the other women, who, by their undisturbed countenances, and unagitated demeanour, pointed themselves out as the professional *keeners* who assisted on the occasion.

As soon as the foremost persons came up to me, I raised my hat for a moment, and turned my horse's head about, aware that it is deemed unlucky if any person meeting a funeral passes it without turning back to accompany it at least some short distance. I am always anxious to yield to such prejudices as this among my countrymen; it costs not much trouble to show some slight respect to their feelings, and I think one is especially called on so to do upon such occasions. It always appeared to me that trifles like these serve greatly to draw together the bonds of charity and friendly feeling between the different classes in this much divided country, which it is to be lamented are often heedlessly and rudely broken through by many who, unobservant of mankind, know not that it is one of those immutable laws inherent in our very nature, and no where of more force than in the bosoms of our warm-hearted countrymen, that a far deeper feeling of gratitude and affection is engendered by an expression of sympathy or participation either in sorrow or joy than by laboured kindnesses, which in truth are often felt as absolutely oppressive.

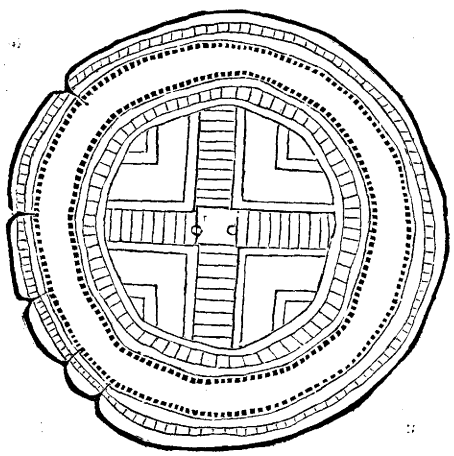
By reining in my horse, I gradually allowed the whole crowd to pass me by, though it seemed almost to be interminable; I was astonished at finding that it extended probably along upwards of a mile of the road and consisted of not less than two thousand people. I then resumed my journey, and in a few minutes the intervening ground hid the entire procession from my view, and the funeral wail gradually became distant, and at last totally died away.

I subsequently learned that the deceased was a very extensive farmer, claiming to be a descendant of one of the old native families, who derive their lineage from the ancient princes of our land; that he had just terminated a long life spent from his childhood on his paternal inheritance, in constant intercourse with the poor peasantry, by whom he was much beloved, not only in consequence of his ancient descent, but from his having had the character of exercising lavishly the hospitality of the olden time, besides possessing pre-eminently in his own person many of the other virtues and qualities which stand highest in the estimation of our countrymen.

It is an interesting fact that Curran, who was from his infancy familiar with the language of his co..ry, and in his youthful days took especial pleasure in constantly mixing in the social meetings of the peasantry, has been known to declare that he derived his first notions of poetry and eloquence from the compositions of the hired mourner over the dead. O'G.

## IRISH ANTIQUITIES.

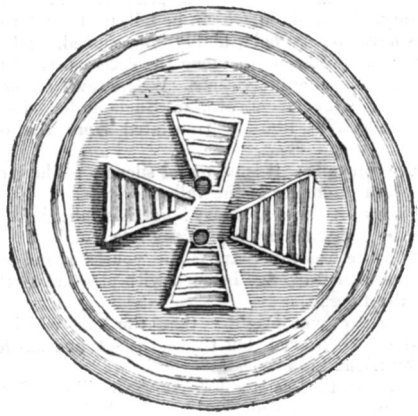
The curious piece of gold, represented in the annexed engraving, which is copied from Harris's edition of Ware's Antiquities, derives no small interest from the singular and romantic circumstance which led to its discovery, of which the following account was published by Bishop Gibson, in his edition of Camden's Brittania, in the year 1722:



"Near *Bellishannon* (Ballyshannon) were, not many years ago, dug up two pieces of gold, discovered by a method very remarkable. The Bishop of Derry happening to be at dinner, there came in an Irish harper, and sung an old song to his harp. His lordship, not understanding Irish, was at a loss to know the meaning of the song; but, upon enquiry, he found the substance of it to be this, that in such a place, naming the very spot, a man of a gigantic stature lay buried, and that over his breast and back were plates of pure gold, and on his fingers rings of gold, so large, that an ordinary man might creep through them. The place was so exactly described, that two persons there present were tempted to go in quest of the golden prize, which the harper's song had pointed out to them. After they had dug for some time, they found two thin pieces of gold, exactly of the form and bigness of the cut represented above.

"This discovery encouraged them next morning to seek for the remainder; but they could meet with nothing more. The passage is the more remarkable, because it comes pretty near the manner of discovering King Arthur's body by the directions of a British bard, (in the reign of King Henry the Second.) The two holes in the middle of the piece seem to be made for the more convenient tying it to the arm, or some part of the body."

"Doubtless," Harris adds, "his lordship had good authority for this relation, and nothing can call it in question, but that the rings, mentioned in the song, were not found as well as the plates. But that particular, as well as the size of the man, might have been introduced by the bard as a partial exaggeration, by means of the *Bara* or *Animi impetus* of that sort of people."—Antiq. vol. II. p. 126.



The prefixed wood-cut represents another piece of gold of the same description as that given by the Bishop of London. It and another similar were found a few years ago in the County of Roscommon, and is now in the cabinet of the writer. We have also seen some others of the same kind, and believe they were used as ornaments on the back and breast of the kings and nobles in the early ages of christianity in Ireland. The figures of the kings, sculptured in *relievo* on the great stone cross at Clonmacnoise, are represented with round plates of this description, placed upon the breast. P.

## THE MOTHER'S LAMENT.

FOR THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL.

It breathes no more! one low drawn sigh,
One transient thrill;
And purely pale those features lie,
And dreadly still.
I've seen the violet wither so
In April's sun;
But never dreamt this sight of woe,
My precious One!
From thy sweet lip the smile is flown;
Thy life's young light
Hath left, where loveliest it shone,
The grave's pale night.
Thy little hand hath ceased the strife
Of infant play;
Each wonted sign of thy sweet life
O past away!
And yet, and yet, dear babe, 'tis well
For thee to go;
For mournful is their lot, who dwell
O'er long below.
Thy woes were light, to Their sad wail,
Who live to see,
Their bosom's treasure, thus lie pale
And cold like thee!
Thy dewy tears were quickly dried,
Thy pains are o'er;
Thou'rt gone, dear babe, where they abide,
Who weep no more!
To thee, this world of woe, to tread
It was not given:
Thou art above, with Him who said,
Of such is heaven.
The love bereaved, unblest desire,
Privation, strife;
The waste of toil, affliction, ire,
That make up life.
The saddening loss, the sordid gain,
The world's control,
Ne'er left one sorrow, or one stain,
On thy sweet soul.
Yet undisclosed, the primal taint
Slept in thy breast;